HEY, GOOD-'LOOKING': MEET FRANKIE J. ALVAREZ

THE ACTOR'S FIRST ON-SCREEN ROLE ISN'T PLAYING THE STRAIGHT MAN. PAGE 08

metro®
BOSTON Thursday, January 16, 2014 www.metro.us | t: MetroBOS | f: MetroBoston

Clean your room, get dirty in bed

PAGE 09

Hashtagging with Arctic Monkeys

You CAN have a night out at a burger joint

Murders hit 10-year low

Good news. Boston Police and federal authorities report just 40 homicides and a 5 percent dip in violent crime in Boston last year.

Bad news. The number of reported and attempted robberies in the downtown area rose by nearly 40 percent in 2013. PAGE 02

ILLUSTRATION: BILLY BECERRA, METRO

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1 NEWS

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1. 'VIDEO: Bruce Springsteen joins Jimmy Fallon to address Bridgegate'
2. 'VIDEO: Peter Pan actor proposes to Wendy during live show'
3. 'VIDEO: Macklemore and Ryan Lewis perform 'Can't Hold Us' on MTA bus'

Today's tweet

"When I'm working at the Andrew square dunkin donuts I always add my man-made cream to the Boston cream donuts #yummy #mydunkin #Southie"

We're hoping @MikeBainComedy is joking, but just in case he's not, here's a heads up.

Unexplained and abrupt

Isis closing stuns local parents

Isis Parenting, a popular mini-chain of pregnancy centers, unexpectedly announced their closing on Tuesday evening, causing an uproar among Boston-area parents.

A cause for the closing has yet to be announced, but according to the company's Facebook page, Isis is "taking steps to communicate with all affected class participants over the coming days and we thank the Isis community in advance for your patience and understanding during this very difficult time." METRO

Safety alert

Somerville issues warning after attacks on women

Three women walking along Somerville streets were indecently assaulted during separate incidents within the past three months, prompting the city to issue a safety alert on Tuesday. The attacks have occurred in the areas of Union and Porter squares during the early evening or nighttime, with the most recent taking place Sunday. The suspect was described as a Hispanic man, between 25 and 30 years old, about 5 feet, 6 inches tall with a medium build and brown eyes. METRO

THE SUSPECT.
SOMERVILLE POLICE

Robbery, attempted robbery numbers increase downtown

Robbery stats. Overall, violent crime in Boston dipped last year compared to 2012.

Despite a downturn in overall crime and homicides in Boston last year, the number of reported robberies and attempted robberies in Boston's downtown area rose by nearly 40 percent.

Overall, violent crime in Boston dropped about 5 percent in 2013 compared to 2012, and homicides, which numbered 40, hit a 10-year low, according to BPD and federal crime statistics.

But one area seeing a rise in robberies and attempted robberies was police district A-1, which includes much of downtown Boston from the North End to the Public Garden. Robberies and attempted robberies there increased from 184 in 2012 to 257 last year, police data shows.

Crime stats

Other districts see uptick in certain crimes

Downtown Boston wasn't the only area to experience an uptick in certain crimes last year.

In the police department's D-4 district, which includes the Back Bay, South End and Kenmore neighborhoods, vehicle thefts and attempted car thefts increased by about 51 percent, from 157 in 2012 to 238 last year.

In the police district that includes Roxbury, burglaries and attempted burglaries increased 14 percent from 439 in 2012 to 499 last year.

Citywide, non-fatal shootings also increased to 218 from 207 in 2012.

Boston Police patrol Downtown Crossing. / NICOLAUS CZARNECKI, METRO

The trend appears to be continuing thus far in 2014, with preliminary police data showing that the number of robberies and attempted robberies downtown is so far keeping pace with last year's total.

The Business Improvement District, which works to transform a 34-block area of downtown Boston, said last year's increase in robberies was primarily outside of that area. Rosemarie Sansone, president of the BID, said the group's ambassadors serve as a crime deterrent.

"The Downtown Boston BID's ambassador program provides an essential service by providing another layer of eyes and ears to the Boston police," Sansone said, adding that the BID also is working with police to educate the public about their personal safety when carrying electronics.

MICHAEL NAUGHTON
michael.naughton@metro.us

Suspect fatally shot in home invasion

Boston Police respond to a fatal home invasion on Esmond Street in Dorchester Wednesday morning. / NICOLAUS CZARNECKI, METRO

A man was fatally shot in Dorchester on Wednesday morning in what was an apparent home invasion that was stopped by a gun-wielding homeowner.

Boston police said officers were called to 85 Esmond St. about 9:30 a.m. One man was found dead at the scene, police said, and an investigation was underway.

On Wednesday afternoon, the Suffolk district attorney's office said that no one would be in court in connection with the incident and that prosecutors and police were still conducting a "very active" investigation.

The person who was fatally shot was one of two masked men who burst into the Esmond Street apartment and was confronted by the owner, who was armed with a gun, according to the Globe. The owner then chased the second suspect from the home; police apprehended him as he fled the home.

The homeowner is also in custody, as police check to see if he had a current firearm license. MICHAEL NAUGHTON

Quoted

"Police and prosecutors are still gathering facts amid a very active investigation."

Suffolk district attorney's office

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Guilty verdict. State Rep. Henriquez gets jail for 2012 assault on woman

Rep. Carlos Henriquez was led away in handcuffs Wednesday after being found guilty by a jury in a domestic violence case stemming from an early morning rendezvous in Arlington Heights during the summer of 2012.

Henriquez, a Dorchester Democrat in his second term, was found guilty in Cambridge District Court of two counts of assault and battery, and was acquitted on an additional count of assault and battery, witness intimidation and larceny of a SIM card.

After the six-person jury delivered their verdict at noon Wednesday, Judge Michele Hogan said she was "very concerned that you're not remorseful" and sentenced Henriquez to two-and-a-half years in a house of correction, with six months of the sentence to be served and the rest to be suspended. SHNS

Henriquez / TED FITZGERALD, POOL PHOTO

Term limit

Following Wednesday's conviction and sentencing, and after several Republican lawmakers called for Henriquez to resign, House Speaker Robert DeLeo said the representative should strongly consider resigning and if he does not, he would ask the House Ethics Committee to consider disciplinary action.

Newest US citizens sworn in

Hundreds of people became America's newest citizens during a naturalization ceremony on Wednesday at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum. About 200 people from various countries took the oath of American citizenship. In celebration of their new citizenship, the library presented each person with a commemorative edition of the inaugural address of President John F. Kennedy.

NICOLAUS CZARNECKI, METRO

Abortion rights

Buffer zone mulled at Supreme Court

U.S. Supreme Court justices questioned the scope of the Massachusetts Buffer Zone Law Wednesday, making it seem likely they will strike it down as unconstitutional as anti-abortion protesters have demanded. The 35-foot no-entry zone was enacted in part because of safety concerns highlighted by violent acts committed against abortion providers in the past. Pro-life advocates argue the zone keeps them from being able to convince women to keep their pregnancies. REUTERS

In court. Tsarnaev pals seek 2015 trial on charges of obstruction

Three college friends of accused Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev were due in court yesterday for a hearing ahead of their trial on charges they helped hide his tracks from the FBI.

Dias Kadyrbayev and Azamat Tazhayakov, both exchange students from Kazakhstan, face obstruction of justice charges and, if convicted, could face 25 years in prison or deportation.

Robel Phillipos of Cambridge has been charged with lying to investigators and could face up to 16 years in prison.

Kadyrbayev and Phillipos in a joint motion filed with prosecutors asked that the trial be scheduled for January 2015, while Tazhayakov asked for quicker proceedings, with a trial to begin in July 2014. All three have pleaded not guilty. REUTERS

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Online scam

Craigslist sellers robbed, stabbed in Worcester

Worcester police are warning people to use caution when buying or selling things on Craigslist after one person was stabbed and another was robbed while meeting a "buyer."

Worcester police on Tuesday issued the warning after two people were attacked.

The incidents happened on Jan. 6. The victim was advertising an electronic item and agreed to meet the potential buyer at a location in Worcester that they agreed on. When they met, the buyer asked if they could move to a more secluded location. The buyer then took out a knife and tried to rob the man, police said. The two then got into a fight during which the man was stabbed several times. The buyer then took the item and fled.

Worcester police said a similar incident occurred earlier the same day during which a person selling an electronic item on Craigslist was robbed.

Police said the description in both incidents was similar and detectives are investigating. MICHAEL NAUGHTON

Report

Anyone with information can call 508-799-8651.

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A new operator has been chosen to run the state's commuter rail network. / NICOLAUS CZARNECKI, METRO

MBCR claims lack of T transparency

Commuter rail. A complaint is seeking public documents related to the T's new rail contract.

Massachusetts Bay Commuter Railroad Co., which recently lost a multi-billion dollar contract to continue running the MBTA's commuter rail system, is asking the T to immediately release public documents associated with the procurement process.

The complaint, filed Tuesday in Suffolk County Superior Court, came nearly a week after the state transportation board unanimously awarded the eight-year, $2.68 billion contract to Keolis Commuter Services.

In a statement released Tuesday night, MBCR said, "Following the January 8 meeting of the MassDOT Board of Directors, the MBTA promised the immediate release of the proposal submitted by [Keolis.] Despite numerous public statements promising openness and transparency, the MBTA has yet to release the document."

The company also seeks to extend a 10-day deadline to contest the decision so it can consider an appeal.

In response, the T called the procurement process "open and transparent," and said procurement documents were posted on its website.

"It is worth noting that MBCR has been resisting this effort at transparency, insisting that the MBTA is obligated to keep key parts of the MBCR submittal confidential and asking a court to prohibit the MBTA from making disclosures in response to public records requests," T spokesman Joe Pesaturo said in an email.

Quoted

"The MBTA will continue to work to make much of the record of this procurement widely available."

Joe Pesaturo, T spokesman

MORGAN ROUSSEAU
morgan.rousseau@metro.us

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2
CULTURE

THE WORD

Dorothy Robinson takes on the world of gossip.

DOROTHY ROBINSON
@dorothyatmetro
dorothy.robinson@metro.us

A swimmingly good party for Steven Tyler

Steven Tyler, looking more and more like an extra from "Deadwood," held onto model Marisa Miller at the 50th anniversary of the Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue at Dolby Theatre on Tuesday in Hollywood, Calif.

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Ciara announces pregnancy with Future

R&B star Ciara and her fiance, producer Future, are having a baby! So is there a boy or a girl in Ciara and Future's future?

Ciara knows, but she's not telling. However, one thing she will say is that it will be the kind of baby that Future likes and Ciara does not.

Regarding the sex of their child, the "Body Party" singer told HuffPost Live, "I did have a preference before I found out what it was. ... [The result] was different than what I thought, but my fiance got what he wanted."

Cool, so awesome lesson for new parents: You should both establish preferences for the sex of your baby, and they should be different so no matter what, one of you is disappointed in your child before it's even born.

Ciara outside of "The View" on Tuesday

Ciara spilled the news on Tuesday's episode of "The View" that she and Future are expecting. Barbara Walters — who, during the first few minutes of an interview, kept looking at the singer's torso — addressed Ciara in typical Barbara Walters fashion, saying, "There are rumors about pregnancy. Do you want to confirm?"

And as Barbara Walters is wont to do, she got results: Ciara stood up to display her baby bump.

Ciara and Future plan to marry this year. Presumably after the birth of their child — Miss C looks pretty far along. They should probably wait until she's had time to recover from her baby's birth and stupid gender.

MELINDA TAUB

Gender bias

"I did have a preference before I found out what it was. ... [The result] was different than what I thought, but my fiance got what he wanted."

Ciara, on the sex of her baby

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‘Looking’ at life through a new lens

“Looking” (with Alvarez, far right) premieres on Jan. 19 at 10:30 p.m. on HBO. / JOHN P. JOHNSON

TV. Frankie J. Alvarez discusses his role in HBO’s hyped new show.

Before he was tapped to audition for HBO’s “Looking” (a new show about the lives of three young gay men in San Francisco) Frankie J. Alvarez had never acted in front of a camera. A recent Juilliard grad, he’d been working the regional theater scene. But when HBO calls, you answer. Now, he’s one of the three leads on a hotly anticipated new show and says he could not be happier. We got him on the line to talk diversity in media, and more, before the premiere.

What was it about the show that attracted you to join the project?
First of all, the show, writing-wise, is just so naturalistic and the way that Andrew [Haigh] films it ... the camera just feels like another person that you’re in the room with. You really feel a sense of intimacy and it feels like real people talking, which is really exciting. Then, of course, playing Augustine has been a really exciting challenge. What’s so great is to be playing an intelligent, articulate Latin man who really embraces his sexuality and has a strong sense of who he is. As a first generation American with a Cuban background, it’s really fun. I’m not sure we have ever seen a Latin man like this on television.

There hasn’t been an exclusively gay show on a big network like this since “The L Word.” What do you hope this will add to the conversation?
I think what we really want is for the gay community to feel represented and that their voice is being heard, and that they feel they can see themselves in this show. And then, for the straight community, to feel like they have a window into what these guys’ lives are like: To realize and see their own life circumstances within these guys. My wife and I have watched the show and there have been certain moments where we have been like, “Oh my God, that reminds me of that time where I dated that girl and that relationship I had with that guy.”

Does the show attempt to confront any stereotypes?
I think what’s really great is that it feels like, for these three guys, the gay aspect of their lives is just one circumstance out of the many circumstances that they are dealing with. That being said, there are some jokes. There is a little scene that happens in episode six where I tease Patrick for having a gay-sounding voice. So little things like that happen.

I hope that we’ll soon get to a point where a scene with two guys making out isn’t shocking, it’s just another romantic scene.
I hope for the same as well, that we don’t have this divide where this is a gay film and this is a film for straight people. Hopefully that changes in the same way it should change for minorities as well. We shouldn’t be making movies specifically for a specific group.

ALEXANDRA CAVALLO
alexandra.cavallo@metro.us

Bonus question

‘Guys’?

The show seems a bit like “Girls,” with gay men in San Francisco instead of straight girls in New York. Is there any truth to that?
Yeah, I think that’s a simple way to look at it — and I think it’s flattering to be compared to a show like “Girls” or “Sex and the City” — but I think the comparison stops once you watch the show. Yes, they are friends surviving in the city and dealing with relationships, love and their careers, but just totally writing-wise ... it really isn’t like those shows. You know how it is? You have got to sort of frame it, you have to frame the new with the old. Hopefully in 10 years there will be shows coming out where people will be like, “Oh, it’s like the straight ‘Looking.’”

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Hot mess. When you take somebody home, be sure your space keeps up appearances.

Having trouble finding love? A clutter-free makeover could be a good start.
PHOTODISC

It's that time. The date's going well. Really well. You're ready to bring that guy or gal back to your apartment, but the sirens go off in your head as you scramble to surreptitiously straighten up while the date pours a glass of wine. That's because you still haven't removed that picture of your ex by your nightstand and there are unmentionables sitting on the bathroom floor.

Since your home is a reflection of who you are, professional organizing consultant Donna David emphasizes the importance of a first impression: "Your home tells a potential mate so much about your style and taste, personality and lifestyle." Now, this doesn't mean going overboard with a stoic museum space where people are afraid to sit down; keep it inviting, but take care of the basics.

Having a welcoming, organized and presentable home isn't only wise — it's a mirror of yourself as a potential mate. If your date sees a ton of clutter, it could be game over. Lisa Shapot, co-founder of home design firm The Think Tank, says checking out your date's digs is a test to see if you can potentially cohabit with someone. If someone's a neat freak and walks into total chaos, she mentions, "You'll have a 50/50 chance they'll walk away regardless of how fabulous you are."

Then there's the possibility of revealing too much, too soon — like mistakenly leaving some old medication laying around even if a nasty infection has disappeared. Sindi Landman, Shapot's business partner and The Think Tank co-founder, emphasizes the privacy factor as you're dating: "You don't want to open too much of yourself too quickly."

Over time, as the date gets to know you better and a potential relationship blossoms, they can get to know your living space better, too. "After three or four dates, if someone sees you left a dish in the sink, that's no big deal," Landman quips.

They recommend the basics in the beginning, like sweeping, going through medicine cabinets and filing old bills. Also, remove any mementos of exes. Shapot says that when you're holding on too tightly to an old relationship, your "heart is blocked to the potential for something new." Even if you store items at your parents' house for now, at least they're out of sight, out of mind.

As you remove the clutter, ex-boyfriends and ex-girlfriends included, The Think Tank's co-founders recommend a "daykover." This involves a makeover at your abode without lofty renovations or time commitments — instead, it's like a mini overhaul by moving some things around and spicing it up a bit.

Tips for date-friendly homes

DOs:

- Get rid of unnecessary items. Place excess photos and knick-knacks in a box. "Less is more," says David.
- Hide personal items like self-help books. This includes books on the perfect marriage and relationship rescue books, too.
- Keep an eye on visible toiletries. Keep all personal items hidden. David advises, "Don't display an extra toothbrush even though it could be for a valid reason."
- Toss storage items after a year. After you put something in a box to store it, Landman says, if you haven't "looked at it or thought about it," you should toss it.

DON'Ts:

- Maintain a gross refrigerator. Seriously: Toss that old, moldy food, especially since it's not uncommon to open a refrigerator during a date to grab a beverage.
- Let paperwork circulate. David advises reading daily mail rapidly. "Either toss, shred, take action (pay bills) or file away important documents."
- Allow clutter. By straightening up daily, you'll prevent clutter from accumulating.
- Have an unmade bed. Simple enough: Be sure to make it every day, advises Landman.

VICKI SALEMI
letters@metro.us

Advice

Tidy means thoughtful

"Soften your space," Shapot advises. This means buying fresh flowers, lighting candles and getting a throw for your couch from TJ Maxx or Home Goods. And as you grab some fresh lilies, spruce up your space prior to date night the same way you'll put some love into your outfit. It shows your date that you care, Shapot adds: "It's a nice feeling to know somebody thought about it ahead of time."

PLUS

Quoted

"Your home tells a potential mate so much about your style and taste, personality and lifestyle."

Donna David, organizing consultant

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On sale soon

Thomas Rhett
With Jon Pardi, Jan. 17, House of Blues (On sale Friday)

Animals As Leaders
March 3, House of Blues (On sale Friday)

Throwing Muses
With Tanya Donelly, March 7, The Sinclair (On sale Friday)

Fanfarlo
April 19, The Sinclair (On sale Friday)

Toadies
With Supersuckers, April 23, Royale (On sale Friday)

The Knife
April 28, House of Blues (On sale Saturday)

Fall Out Boy and Paramore
With New Politics, June 22, Xfinity Center (On sale Friday)

Contrary to popular belief (for one day last month, at least) Alex Turner is alive and well. Days before our conversation with the Arctic Monkeys frontman, the hashtag #RIPAlexTurner began trending on Twitter in his home country of England. It really would have been a shame if he had died, because — aside from death being a real bummer for the person leaving this mortal coil as well as his family, friends and fans — the band is touring America to promote their fifth and most recent album, "AM," which may be their finest hour. Fortunately, it was just another Internet death hoax.

PROVIDED

If you go

Arctic Monkeys
Feb. 6
With Deerhunter
Agganis Arena
925 Comm. Ave., Boston
$45-$52, 800-745-3000
www.livenation.com

ARCTIC MONKEYS

Alex Turner is not dead — quite the contrary. The singer is rocking into the "AM."

ALIVE AND KICKING OUT THE JAMS

What was going on when you heard about the #RIPAlexTurner hashtag?
It wasn't actually that big of a deal in my world. I think it's a bit like "Super Mario": You get three lives on Twitter. I'm not exposed because I'm not signed up to the old Twitter myself, so I kind of remain relatively oblivious. At some point in the afternoon somebody told me that apparently there was this thing, but it was a sidenote in my day, in all honesty.

Was it a challenge to sequence the "AM" album? It does flow well, but there are so many different sounds on it.
I mean, I suppose sequencing any record always seems to be quite a difficult part of the process, in my experience at least. ... I think to me, there are two pretty clear sides to it, not in terms of the sequencing, like an A-side and a B-side, but there's these two extremes, one of them being sort of like early 1970s rock 'n' roll — sort of heavy metal that got the wrong end of the stick, but not entirely, you know the Spiders from Mars sort of quality with the drum sounds — and I guess you hear that on the ballads a little bit more than the other ones. And I guess the other side of it would be this kind of contemporary R&B angle that exists in a lot of the vocal production, and I guess that was sort of the idea, really, to take that contemporary R&B, or even like a hip-hop influence at times, and apply it to a four-piece rock 'n' roll band.

Q&A

'Do I Wanna Know?'

There's a bit of vulnerability on this album. Was that a conscious decision, to open yourself up more?
I can't say that it was. I think you've got all of these other plates spinning while making a record. I think it would be hard to make a conscious decision to be vulnerable.

I guess in asking that question I was trying to get you to open up and tell me what was going on in your personal life.
Well, I guess I thought I'd dodged that question!

Have you heard any reaction from the R&B or hip-hop community? Are we talking crossover appeal here for the Arctic Monkeys? Any hip-hop radio stations playing "Why'd You Only Call Me When You're High?"?
I think there's been a bit of that, like some of the rap shows in the U.K. Someone sent me a clip of someone rapping over that. The idea that [the song] might get sampled is one that's exciting to me.

That song follows in the grand tradition of Arctic Monkeys song titles that stand on their own before you even hear a note of music, such as "Don't Sit Down 'Cause I've Moved Your Chair," "You Probably Couldn't See for the Lights but You Were Staring Straight at Me" and even "I Bet You Look Good on the Dancefloor." Tell me a little bit about the inspiration.
I suppose it's just that situation. I've sort of been on both ends and been around people when that thing has happened to them. I suppose it started as sort of a joke, like I think a lot of good ideas do. Like you say, it seems like the title of a Monkeys tune that already existed.

Since this is a phone call, I'd be remiss if I didn't ask this: Are you high right now?
Not at all. Not in the slightest.

PAT HEALY
pat.healy@metro.us

Also onstage

Action Bronson

Friday, 7 p.m.
The Paradise
967 Comm. Ave., Boston
$20, 800-745-3000
www.ticketmaster.com
It seems like white rappers insecurely oscillate between being harmlessly clownish and excessively serious — Macklemore's shift from silly novelty ("Thift Shop") to naive "message" music ("Same Love") is a good example. Action Bronson gets things just right — he's got a healthy sense of humor but he's also a totally serious, classic MC, unashamed to just be his big, bearded self.

Action Bronson / GETTY IMAGES

Also onstage

The Southern Belles

Friday, 7:30 p.m.
The Middle East Upstairs
472 Mass. Ave., Cambridge
$10-$12, 21+, 866-777-8932
www.ticketweb.com
The Southern Belles' sound is a very cool mix of a down-home Southern rock and a jam band's sense of jazz-fusion adventurousness. It's not a novel combination — the Allman Brothers pretty much invented it— but the Southern Belles take up the torch and push it into new dimensions, favoring the jazz side over the roots side. MATTHEW DINARO

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FILM

'Stalker'

Friday and Jan. 26
Harvard Film Archive,
24 Quincy St., Cambridge
$7-$9, 617-495-4700
hcl.harvard.edu/hfa
This psychologically rich 1979 film by Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky takes place in a post-apocalyptic wasteland with a cordoned-off area called "The Zone," said to give life to the fantasies of those who enter. We follow a tour guide, Stalker, as he leads two clients there. What will they find, if anything? And will they be able to handle it?

THEATER

'Venus in Fur'

Through Feb. 2
Boston University Theater

Who's in charge? / T. CHARLES ERICKSON

264 Huntington Ave., Boston
$25-$99, 617-266-0800
www.huntingtontheatre.org
In case you were wondering, this isn't an adaptation of the famous erotic novel "Venus in Furs," but a play about the making of an adaptation of "Venus in Furs." Vanda, an actress, gives such a good audition for the lead dominatrix role that it stops being clear where the line between fiction and reality lies in her relationship with the director.

ART

'Doodle'

Through Jan. 26
Nave Gallery Annex,
53 Chester St., Somerville
Free, 617-259-8386
www.navegallery.org
The humble cartoon gets its rightful due as an honest-to-goodness art form for this exhibition, co-curated by locally based children's book illustrator Jef Czekaj, who, for all you '90s nostalgia junkies, used to do a comic called "Grampa and Julie: Shark Hunters" in Nickelodeon Magazine. The artists here show how cartoons can be much more than just, well, doodles.

COMEDY

Bret Ernst

Thursday through Sunday
Laugh Boston,
425 Summer St.,
$20-$25, 21+, 617-725-2844
www.laughboston.com
This New Jersey native shamelessly admits to being a "guido," and his jokes about them are all the funnier for this inside perspective — he knows where they live (usually it's still with their parents). Physical humor is a highlight of his act — his bit on going to the roller rink as a teenager, complete with spot-on pantomiming, is priceless.

MUSIC

Cosmic Loops: Music Beneath the Stars

Tonight, 7
Museum of Science,
One Science Park, Boston
$15, 617-723-2500 www.mos.org

Train Spotting: Kendall Square

Most people probably didn't expect **Toothface** to amount to much during his childhood and teenage years. As a massive head with disproportionately-sized limbs and no torso, his career options surely appeared quite dire. He never would have made it as an underwear model. His head is too huge to fit in a typical McDonald's kitchen. Because his arms can't reach a steering wheel, a future as a pizza delivery boy was also off the table.

Luckily, things fell into place. Toothface trumped the odds and achieved his dream of becoming one of the most well-recognized retail store mascots in New England — all while staying (reasonably) true to his D.I.Y., anti-corporate roots. He reps Newbury Comics — the monolithic dispenser of music, apparel, books, assorted knick-knacks and oh yeah, comics — which remains independently owned after more than 30 years, plus has nearly as many franchises scattered across five states. In addition to paper and plastic bags, Toothface appears on T-shirts, glasses, lunchboxes, countless other novelties, and even shares his namesake with a racing yacht once sailed by store co-founder Mike Dreese.

We chased down the emblem outside the recently-christened Newbury Comics outlet at the CambridgeSide Galleria. Toothface is incapable of speech, and communicates via hand signals and happy dances. It would have been nice if we had been aware of that before scheduling this interview, but, ultimately, we rose to the challenge. After all, we went to college to do stuff like this.

What's it like being a mascot?
(Toothface gives a thumbs-up, indicating that he enjoys being a mascot quite a bit.)

Do people hear your name and confuse it with Two-Face, the Batman villain?
(Oscillates a flat hand, as if to say, "Occasionally, but not much.")

Do you admire fellow mascot, Cap'n Crunch?
(Thumbs-down)

What about Count Chocula?
(Thumbs-up)

Oooooh, what about the GEICO Gecko?
(Shrugs, indicating indifference or ignorance.)

What if you couldn't be a mascot anymore? How would you feel? Do any other professions appeal to you?
(Leans forward, as if to bow his head in deep, inconsolable sadness.)

People see you and think, "We should buy stuff at Newbury Comics." Is there anything else you want the world to know?
(Embarks on an epic, side-to-side shuffle dance, while waving his arms in a circular, joyful motion.)

Outstanding. Do you ever wish that you had a torso?
(Nods repeatedly, to indicate an affirmative response.) BARRY THOMPSON

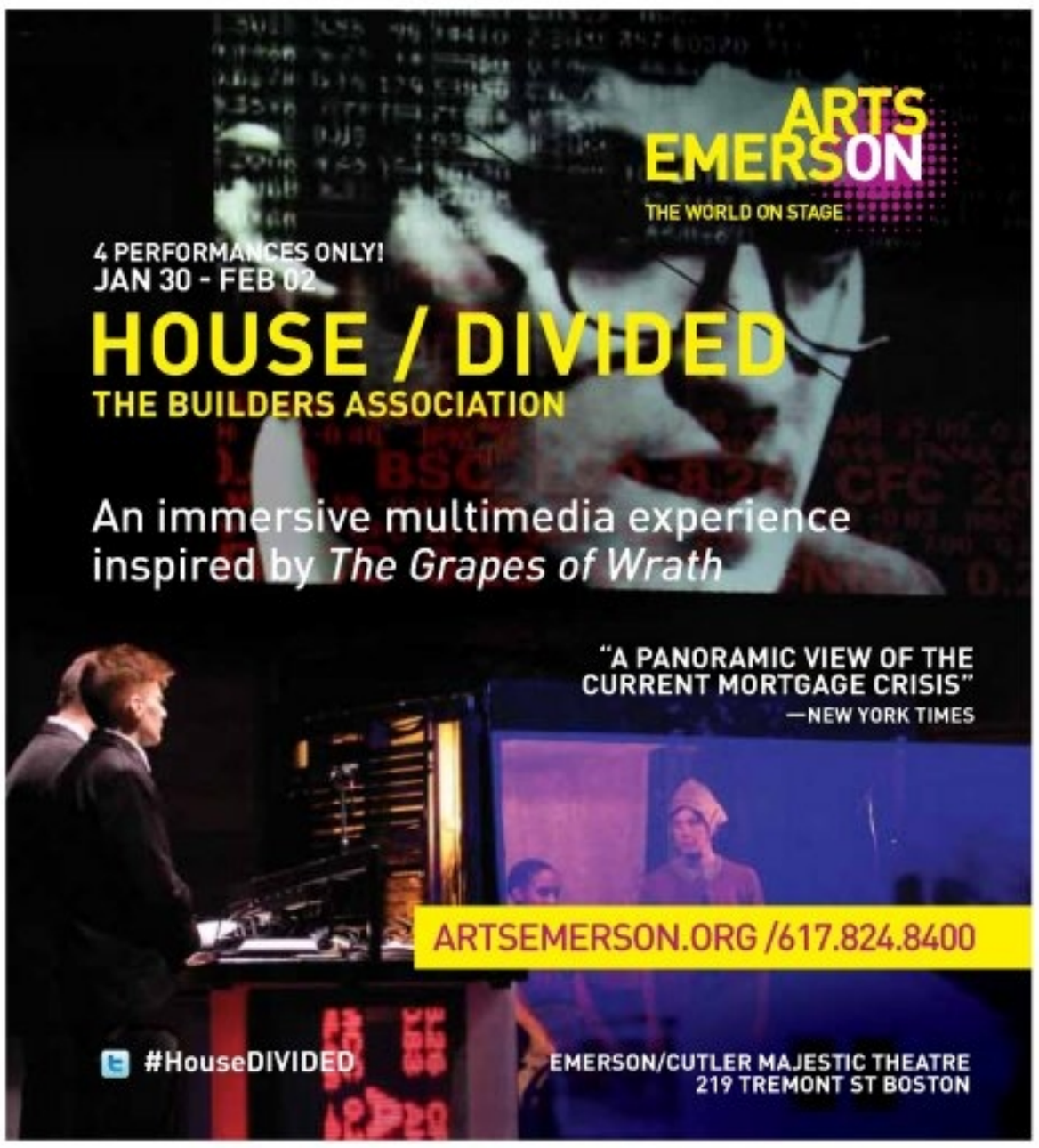
TOOTHFACE / PROVIDED

Art and science come together in this show, which pairs cosmic planetarium imagery with the loop-based sounds of experimental guitarist Ethan Case and his Open Land Trio. This kind of music starts simple and grows in complexity, just as the universe has, and giving it a sort of harmonic connection with the images of deep space being projected. Pretty cool, huh?

NERD CON

Arisia

Friday through Monday
Westin Boston Waterfront,
425 Summer St., Boston
$10-$65, info@arisia.org
2014.arisia.org
Arisia is an annual, fully fan-organized sci-fi and fantasy con, with a focus more on the community than celebrity guests, who are few, and relatively minor. There are art shows, films, a masquerade ball, lots of gaming and everything else you've come to expect from such a gathering. Note: Pre-registration is over, you'll have to get your pass at the door. MATTHEW DINARO



WARD OF THE SATED

Ward 8 sits on the cusp of two neighborhoods: The North End and the resurgent West End. The name nods to the latter, quite rightly, because technically this is not a North End eatery. Spiritually, too, it's worlds apart from the traditional trattoria or even boutique Italian. Still, owner Nick Frattaroli, who took over the space that used to house the popular Nebo, has an Italian connection via his family roots — his uncle and cousins head North End joints Lucia, Filippo and Ducali.

Ward 8's low ceilings, low lighting and warm brick and wood aesthetic make for cozy ambiance. The small interior has a giant rectangular bar located in its center and enormous ship lights with low watt bulbs, hanging like sci-fi chandeliers. The look is simple, yet striking.

The menu is also small but dynamic. It's good for dinner and it's good for drinks. Duxbury oysters come from a small farm, not a mainstream producer, and are tastier for it, but the kicker is a cucumber mignonette that complements the mineral rich flesh. Carpetbagger carpaccio riffs on the classic steak dish with thinly sliced meat wrapped around crispy fried oysters and pickled scallions. The classic Boston brandade salt cod sticks are crispy on the outside and soft on the inside, but it's the wine-infused tomato dipping sauce that makes the dish sing. Well-designed entrees include grilled salmon with organic quinoa pilaf and a ginger miso glaze and free-range chicken roasted with herbs.

As yet, there's no dessert, but the cashew and bacon flecked caramel corn will more than satisfy a sweet tooth. Better still; don't order it, because you won't be able help but consume the entire bowl.

Ward 8 is not your traditional North End trattoria. / PHOTOS BY DEREK KOUYOUMJIAN

Pro Tip

Team Players

Ward 8's team includes a trio of pros: Adam Sheldon will turn off the flatscreens after the game to connect minds to people, drinks and food. So don't argue. Chef Kenny Schweizer (Bristol Lounge) will tweak his menu seasonally, and to improve dishes like the lobster roll (the truffle mayo drowns the meat's flavor). He's already rejiggering that classic to find the best bun and the best presentation for flavor impact. And among other drinks, Mike Wyatt (Eastern Standard) pours a mean Ward 8, a cocktail created at Locke Ober in 1898.

Snacks like crispy steak tacos are served until 1 a.m.

If you go

Ward 8

Entrees: $14-$23.
90 North Washington St., Boston, 617-823-4478
www.ward8.com.

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MUSIC

Triple Threat: Three World Premieres

Jan. 17, 8 p.m.
Jordan Hall at NEC
$20-$50, students with ID $15
617-585-1260, www.bmop.org

BMOP launches the new year with three works hot off the presses. Featuring the creative voices of composers Elena Ruehr, Ken Ueno and David Rakowski in collaboration with dynamic performers Frances-Marie Uitti, two-bow cello, and Amy Briggs, piano. Gil Rose conducts.

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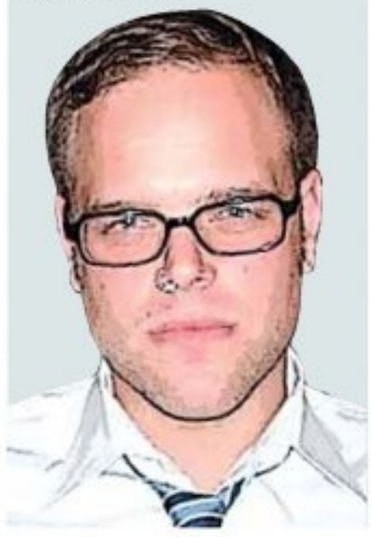

I never thought I'd be the type of person to mourn the loss of a convenience store, but when Tasty Burger opened its Harvard Square location in the old 7-Eleven space on JFK Street, I found myself doing just that. The only thing I'm less interested in seeing opening around here than banks are fast food chains — even small, locally owned ones. I felt that loss particularly sorely because it was one of the only convenience stores in the area that actually sold beer. It felt like visiting a different city, one where they trust customers to behave like adults.

It was, in part, for that reason that it's taken me about a year to get around to checking out the offshoot of the ever-growing burger chain (which has locations in Southie and Fenway as well), despite my appreciation for its ownership group, who are also behind The Franklin Cafe and Citizen Public House. Aside from the street level takeout restaurant, there's also an underground bar area.

See more at www.metro.us

It's a big, cavernous space, with tall red brick walls decorated with graffiti-style art and prints, the type of things you'd see on the wall of a college kid's dorm room. In fact, that's the general feel of the space: a slightly cooler than average campus pub and rec room. (There's a pool table and juke box, as well).

One thing it doesn't have, however, is a full liquor license, which is another thing that's kept me away for so long. But on a couple recent visits, I found it to be a perfectly welcoming space to duck away from the world, watch some afternoon football and drain a few cans of beer, even if I'm still not on board with the appeal of the fast food-style burgers and hot dogs on offer here — or anywhere else, for that matter. Fast food is still fast food, no matter how cool the room that you're eating it in.

Fortunately, the beer selection more than makes up for the lack of spirits, which shouldn't be a surprise to anyone familiar with the well-sourced, broad product inventory at Citizen. Forty-plus beers is just about the sweet spot before a list gets too unwieldy, or unsold product starts to go bad. Tasty Burger has 12 tap lines, with drafts ranging from $5.75 to $6.75, and pitchers from $10 for PBR to $25 for the likes of Ommegang and Rapscallion. The real treasure trove, however, comes in the 30 or so canned beers. They've got all the usual suspects here, from Cisco, Sixpoint, 21st Amendment, Dale's Pale Ale and Brooklyn, to macro-hip cans like High Life, Narragansett, PBR and Coors, as well as some less familiar faces like Glutenberg Blonde and Little Yella Pils.

If you go

Tasty Burger

40 JFK St., Cambridge
617-425-4444
www.tastyburger.com

Last year was the year of the canned beer, if not much else, with larger selections showing up on bar menus, and many breweries shifting toward the format (like Sam Adams, who introduced its "Sam can.") There are a couple reasons for that, most importantly that cans are better suited to keeping out light and oxygen than bottles, which can spoil the beer. Moreover, and this is especially important when you're running a collegiate-type bar like this, unlike bottles cans don't tend to shatter on the floor when they're knocked over — which is a distinct possibility after you've tried all of the options you've got your eye on here.

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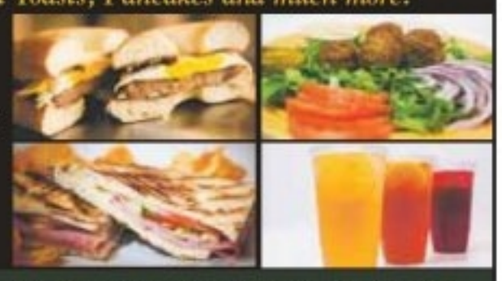

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Take a jaunt this January

Maine

Saddleback Mountain

www.saddlebackmaine.com
Base elevation: 1,417 feet
Summit elevation: 4,120 feet
Vertical drop: 2,000 feet
Skiable area: 59 acres
Number of lifts: 5
Number of trails: 66
Longest run: 3,000 feet
Saddleback hosts its Family Fun Day on Saturday with kids activities including a relay race, a candy jar guess, projects, contests, activities, prizes and giveaways, all with the theme of staying safe on the slopes. The event will reinforce KNOW THE CODE, a national campaign to promote ski safety and responsibility.

New Hampshire

Waterville Valley Resort

www.waterville.com
Base elevation: 2,460 feet
Summit elevation: 4,004 feet
Vertical drop: 2,020 feet
Skiable area: 220 acres
Number of lifts: 12
Number of trails: 52
Longest run: 15,840 feet
The KISS 108-FM Radio Winter Games will be held Saturday, with prizes being handed out to participants all day long. The family-friendly event will feature a snowball toss, a frozen T-shirt contest, giveaways and much more. KISS will also stick around for the après portion of the event.

Cranmore Mountain Resort

www.cranmore.com
Base elevation: 500 feet
Summit elevation: 2,000 feet
Vertical drop: 1,500 feet
Skiable area: 200 acres
Number of lifts: 10
Number of trails: 54
Longest run: 5,280 feet
Spend Saturday with a team of Cranmore Ambassadors for a guided mountain tour. Free to skiers and riders off all ages and abilities, the tour will feature a "backstage pass" to the mountain, including insider tips and fun Cranmore facts from the people who know Cranmore the best.

New Hampshire

The Ice Castle at Loon Mountain in New Hampshire is quite a sight.
ICECASTLES.COM

Get an icy reception at Loon

www.loonmtn.com. Summit elevation: 3,050 feet. **Vertical drop:** 2,100 feet. **Number of lifts:** 12. **Number of trails:** 60
If you haven't visited the Ice Castle at Loon Mountain, check it out this weekend. Measuring nearly an acre in size, the 12,000-ton, 40-foot-high frozen fortress has taken shape over the last month thanks to cold weather, a large sprinkler system and a dedicated crew of ice artisans.

Vermont

Okemo Mountain Resort

www.okemo.com
Base elevation: 1,144 feet
Summit elevation: 3,344 feet
Vertical drop: 2,200 feet
Skiable area: 632 acres
Number of lifts: 19
Number of trails: 119
Longest run: 23,760 feet
Join Okemo for a snowshoe hike under the full moon. This hike takes you up the mountain through the woods to the fire pit in Jackson Gore to roast marshmallows and tell ghost stories, if you dare. This event is free if you have your own snowshoes. Okemo will have rentals on hand if you don't. **METRO**

PLUS

Massachusetts

Wachusett Mountain

www.wachusett.com
Summit elevation: 2,006 feet
Vertical drop: 1,000 feet
Number of lifts: 8
Number of trails: 22

Wachusett will hold its Sun Drop Big Air Bang on Saturday, allowing you to show off your big air skills that you've been practicing all season. The event will feature a live MC, music, prizes and a cash purse.

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SUNANDSKI.COM
WOBURN: 406 Washington Street | I-95/128, Former West Marine
PEMBROKE: 296 Old Oak Street | Route 139, In front of Christmas Tree Shops

Horoscope

♑ Capricorn | Dec. 22-Jan 20. Listen carefully, but don't allow your emotions to sway you in one direction or another. It would be better to mediate, rather than participate, in an unwinnable debate.

♒ Aquarius | Jan. 21-Feb 18. Show everyone how capable you are. A proposal will bring in extra cash and change the way you live. Don't let a secret affair cause emotional grief.

♓ Pisces | Feb. 19-March 20. You can make your dreams come true with a little time and effort. Join organizations that share your interests and expertise. A special person should be treated to a romantic evening.

♈ Aries | March 21-April 20. Your changing or inconsistent attitude will cause disruptions with the people you deal with personally and professionally.

♉ Taurus | April 21-May 21. Relax, and enjoy friends and family. Make personal changes that will keep you up to date mentally and physically. A pleasurable trip will entice you, but caution while traveling will be essential.

♊ Gemini | May 22-June 20. Set your goals high, and get ready for action. Consultation with experts will enable you to cut corners and reach your destination quickly. Mix business with pleasure.

♋ Cancer | June 21-July 22. If you feel uncertain, step back and observe. The more information you gather, the easier it will be to make a tough choice. Refuse to get upset about matters you cannot change.

♌ Leo | July 23-Aug. 22. An emotional matter will skyrocket if you don't control the situation. Prepare to make last-minute changes if it will help you avoid an unsavory entanglement.

♍ Virgo | Aug. 23-Sept. 22. Take steps to ensure that things go the way you plan. Don't leave anything to chance, and take steps to correct a situation.

♎ Libra | Sept. 23-Oct. 22. Too much, too fast leads to disaster. Watch what everyone else is doing and protect your interests. Empty promises can be expected. Get what you want in writing, or take a pass.

♏ Scorpio | Oct. 23-Nov. 21. Let your mind wander and your imagination take over. Take a look at your friendships, lifestyle and home base. An unconventional arrangement will inspire you.

♐ Sagittarius | Nov. 22-Dec. 21. An investment opportunity may look like a sure thing, but look before you leap. You aren't likely to have all the facts required to make an educated choice. BERNICE BEDE OSOL

Letters

Czar Christie

Re: 'So-called "bullies" make history' (Metro, Jan. 15) I got a good laugh from Robert Sieger's letter lamenting poor Chris Christie's "ordeal by the liberal media." Our New Jersey governor, a Tony Soprano wannabe, is finally being revealed for the petty, vindictive tyrant that he has always been. And the George Washington Bridge scandal is just the start of what will be exposed. Mr. Sieger posted a list of American "bullies who are now American icons," but he forgot many other historical bullies who are also icons, but not in a good way: Caligula, Nero, Attila the Hun, Genghis Khan, Ivan IV, Robespierre, Stalin and many more. You're right, Mr. Sieger — none of them would have tolerated the teachers union either!

JANET WALSH, VIA EMAIL

Follow the money

Re: 'Congress v. the middle class' (Metro, Jan. 15) To letter writer Herb Stark and other Metro readers, may I offer an answer to Congress's inability to do what is right/good for us, the middle class: Money! Generally speaking, Republicans and Democrats are in office today because of the larger campaign contributions the upper class is able to give. Statistics show that the elected officials spend more time raising money to be elected than they do on studying policy to benefit the people, especially monetary policy. As stated in the letter, cutting funding is wrong when the problem lies in Congress's ignorance of the money power. The answer is found in our debt-based, usurious monetary system controlled by the privately owned Federal Reserve, where their policy is to have the middle class never have enough money to pay their debts, giving all of our elected officials a sense of a constant state of scarcity.

DAVID SNIECKUS, VIA EMAIL

letters@metro.us

Keep them as brief as possible, preferably under 100 words. Metro reserves the right to edit all letters. Please include your name and contact info.

Sudoku: Easy and hard

1		3			6	7		5
					9		4	6
					7	3	1	
	2		6		4			
	3			9			8	
			2		3		6	
	9	6	7					
4	7		9					
5		1	4			9		7

						6	5	
		5	8					3
4					3		8	7
				8		7	2	6
2		3				8		1
7	6	8		2				
8	3		6					9
9					2	5		
	5	1						

How to play
Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Crossword

Across
1 Flavor enhancer
4 Cult
8 Hoard (2 wds.)
13 Yawn
14 Lunar phenomenon
15 Port near Kyoto
16 Churn up
17 Paperless exam
18 Chinese pooches, slangily
19 Technique
20 Early mail service (2 wds.)
22 Sputters
24 Balance
25 Belly dance instrument
26 Mutual fund charge
28 Hedge shrub
31 Fixes a sock
34 Throng
35 NASDAQ rival
36 Toward shelter
37 Zeus' shield
38 Metrical foot
39 Grab onto
40 Set down
41 Elbows
42 August kid, maybe
43 Huge excess
44 Place to soak
45 Rocky Mountain st.
47 Cheese dish
51 Vole (2 wds.)
55 Bliss
56 Low voices
57 Diminishes
58 Friar
59 Wharves
60 One and only
61 Indy champ — Luyendyk
62 Full of back talk
63 Loaf end
64 Genetic strand

Down
1 Kiwi language
2 Chowchow
3 Semiliquid
4 Chased away
5 Deserves
6 Potter's medium
7 Enameled metal
8 Moved jauntily
9 Exploiters
10 Talk, talk, talk (hyph.)
11 Luau strings
12 Free ticket
13 — Zeppelin
20 Not to mention
21 Dental photos (hyph.)
23 Like city lots
26 Not phony
27 Ancient Roman poet
29 Salinger heroine
30 Duck's feet
31 Wonka's creator
32 — vera lotion
33 Rents a U-Haul
34 Admirer
35 Weeper of myth
37 Tolerate
41 Safe to drink
43 Shiny
44 Mortarboard feature
46 Foul smells
47 Ivan's dollar
48 Borg of tennis
49 Old Greek colony
50 Little child
51 Glove compartment items
52 Charles Lamb
53 Netting
54 Plaintive reed
58 Sully

Yesterday's answer

M	A	N	S	■	U	H	A	U	L	■	P	Y	R	E
U	T	A	H	■	T	O	R	S	O	■	R	E	A	L
D	O	D	O	■	T	E	N	E	T	■	E	T	T	A
S	N	A	P	P	E	D	■	R	U	F	F	I	A	N
■	■	■	T	O	R	■	■	■	S	R	A	■	■	■
P	S	H	A	W	■	S	A	M	■	A	B	A	S	E
O	P	A	L	■	E	N	S	I	G	N	■	T	O	M
W	O	R	K	S	L	I	K	E	A	C	H	A	R	M
E	R	E	■	I	M	P	E	N	D	■	U	R	E	Y
R	E	S	E	T	■	E	D	S	■	E	M	I	R	S
■	■	■	P	E	T	■	■	■	X	V	I	■	■	■
C	H	A	I	S	E	S	■	L	E	A	D	E	R	S
E	A	R	L	■	M	A	J	O	R	■	I	L	E	S
O	L	E	O	■	P	R	A	D	O	■	F	L	I	T
S	T	A	G	■	T	I	M	E	X	■	Y	E	N	S

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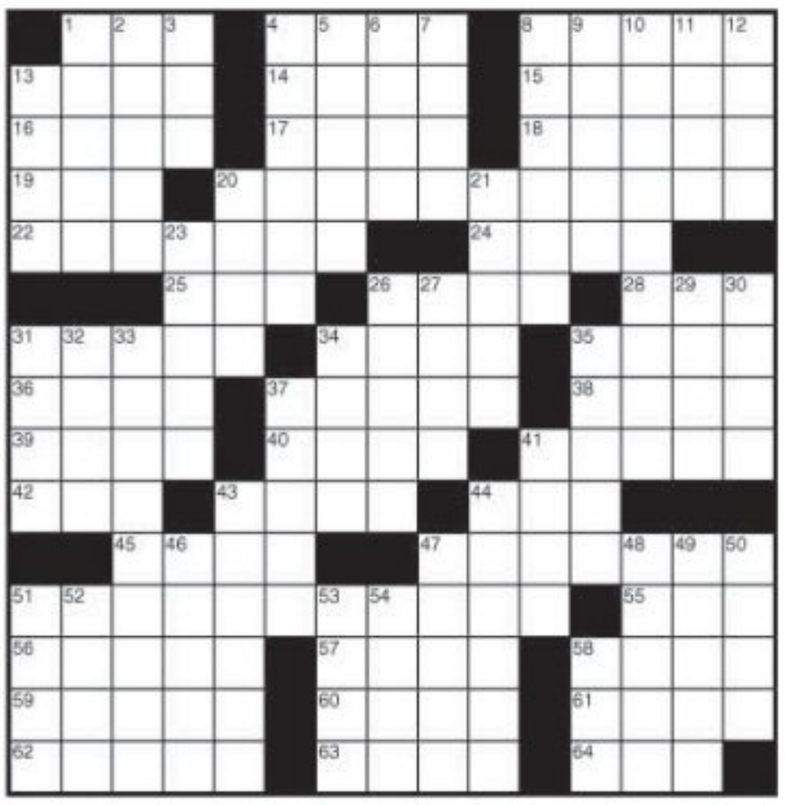

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Stockpiling

Celtics acquire more draft picks, deal Crawford

When the Celtics were ripping off wins to start the month of December, having won five of seven, many said the only person that could make Brad Stevens' club a lottery contender was Danny Ainge. That plan seems to be going into effect as Ainge made his second trade in 10 days Wednesday, shipping guards Jordan Crawford and MarShon Brooks to the Warriors as part of a three-team deal. The Celtics will receive center Joel Anthony from the Heat, a protected first-round pick (via Philly) and a second-round pick. Point guard Toney Douglas will land in Miami. Crawford had been enjoying the best season of his NBA career this year, averaging 13.7 points per game.

Rajon Rondo was placed on the Celtics' active roster prior to Wednesday's game.

MATT BURKE

Pats defense has held its own in wild season

NFL playoffs. Bill Belichick's defense frustrated Andrew Luck last weekend.

The Patriots have been graded on a higher scale than the rest of the NFL due to their success in the early part of the 2000s. For proof, take into account that Bill Belichick fielded a question at his weekly press conference at Gillette Stadium Wednesday that began with, "Bill, it's been nearly 10 years since you won the Super Bowl."

This "drought" has a lot to do with the issues of Belichick's defense since the last title. In the playoffs of 2005, 2006 and 2007, the Rodney Harrison-Tedy Bruschi-Richard Seymour–led defenses appeared to simply be old. The 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 defensive units could best be labeled as "transition groups."

As it stands now, this season's Pats defense has proven to be one of the more resilient groups of Belichick's 14-year run in Foxboro, highlighted by last Saturday's four-interception night of the NFL's next big thing, Andrew Luck. Alfonzo Dennard picked off Luck twice, linebacker Dont'a Hightower grabbed one Luck throw and rookie linebacker Jamie Collins had his breakout performance while intercepting the Colts QB early in the fourth quarter.

In addition, safety Devin McCourty has regained the high level of play he displayed in his rookie campaign and has become the Pats' most reliable force in the secondary.

Not so surprisingly, the big pants left behind by Vince Wilfork have been the toughest to fill, but tackles Chris Jones and Sealver Siliga have drawn enough attention for defensive ends Chandler Jones and Rob Ninkovich to shine.

MATT BURKE
matthew.burke@metro.us

Bedridden

Patriots quarterback Tom Brady did not participate in Wednesday's practice due to an undisclosed illness and was "sent home" early in the day.

- Brady was fighting a cold last week leading up to the Colts game.

Patriots defensive end Chandler Jones has done plenty of celebrating this season as he recorded a team-high 11.5 sacks. / GETTY IMAGES

3 SPORTS

Watch online

Find video and a recap of Wednesday night's Celtics-Raptors game: **Metro.us/sports.**

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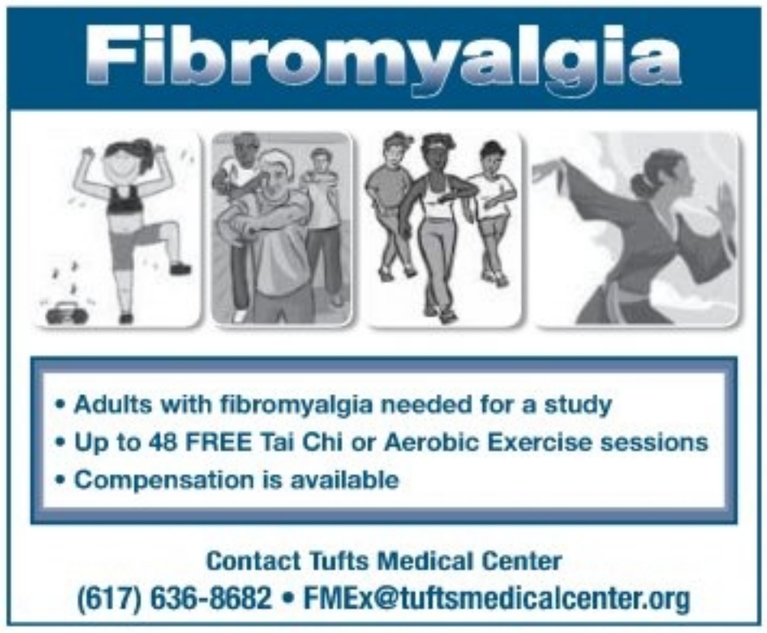
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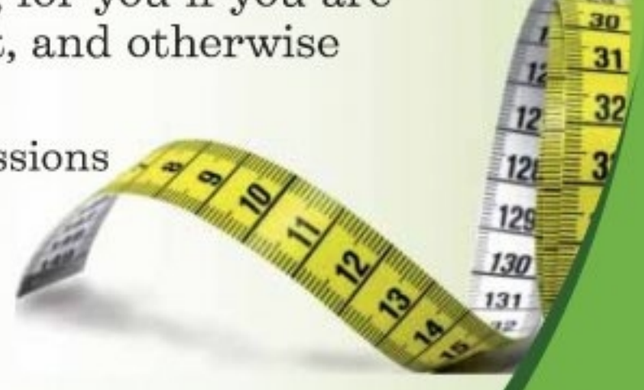

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